teraction between the two countries, and identifed several specific measures for this. A proposal for organising an exclusive Indian expo in Morocco was initiated.

Demand of Coal by 2000 A.D.

44. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate demand of coal in the country by 2000 A.D. and the projections made till then;

(b) whether there is a need to increase the production of coal during that period; and

(c) if so, the details of proposal mooted by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Planning Commission has assessed the demand of coal at 311 million tonnes by the terminal year of 8th Five Year Plan (1996-97). No firm projections are available beyond terminal year of 8th Five Year Plan.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Steps taken to meet the demand of coal in the country, inter-alia, include opening of new mines, modernisation of existing mines, application of new technology, ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities, better capacity utilisation and maintaining good industrial relations.

In addition, Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 has been amended to allow parivate sector participation in coal mining. This amendment enables companies engaged in power generation, and such other end uses as may be notified by Govt, from time to time, to carry out coal mining. This is in addition to the existing provision enabling companies engaged in the production of iron and steel to carry out coal mining.

Theft of coal in Western Coalfields

45. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale thefts of coal during transportation of coal, in the Western Coalfields;

(b) whether Government are aware of the modus operandi of these thefts;

(c) whether Government are aware that the coal transporters have become "overnight millionaires" since the time they have contracted coal transport contracts with the Western Coalfields;

(d) whether Government propose to ask the Income Tax Department to make a survey of the coal transport contractors to check coal theft; and

(e) the steps being taken to prevent coal transportation thefts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) No case of large scale theft of coal during transportation of coal in Western Coalfields Limited has come to the notice of Government.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Steps for checking such thefts have to be taken by the carriers, i.e. Railways/ transport companies etc. WCL on their part have deployed adequate staff to prevent thefts in transportation from pitheads to Railway sidings.

Setting up of Joint Business Commission by India and Oman

46. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Oman have agreed to set up a Joint Business Commission to provide a forum for exchange of